

## FRENCH INDO-CHINA

thirty varieties of each, then corn and sugar in the order of their importance. But the country is essentially one of *monoculture*—a danger for which the Khmers have only their indolence to blame. Only recently has an industrialized crop like rubber become important. As the climate is uniform throughout Cambodia, it is only the differences in soil and proximity to the Mekong that makes for the variety in crops.

The country produces more than it consumes and is consequently able to export fish, livestock, and rice. It has also a great future in cotton and rubber. Yet in spite of the country's potential and actual wealth and the relatively small population, the Khmers are miserable. The thatch of Cambodia contrasts with the tiled roofs of her rich Cochin-Chinese neighbours. Fundamentally the Khmer is neither farmer\* functionary, merchant, nor labourer, but an artisan whose innate aestheticism comes out in the fashioning and decoration of even the humblest tools. Khmer indolence and independence is both historical and natural, and has a good side in its docility. The climate aids and abets, and the abundance of nature is such that the Khmer can earn his livelihood by scratching the earth or dangling a fish into the river. Their disdain of activity is genuine. They are perfectly willing to have the Chinese, the French, and even the Annamites control their country's economy,

The population of Cambodia has been terribly decimated by fever and strife. By the beginning of the twentieth century it had fallen to 1,200,000 and since then has only slowly increased. In the recent census (1936) the Khmers formed only 50 per cent of the population.

in capital, Paom-Penh. The aborigines and  
numbered about half a million more. The indigenous  
peoples, vaguely  
to the Khmers, lived peacefully beside them,  
yet  
This attitude of indulgence is far from  
characteristic  
for the Mois, the Khmers east of the  
Mekong, whom  
as and hunt as slaves. Chinese  
immigrants  
100,000 and, unlike their status  
in Annam\*  
are farmers than merchants in Cambodia.  
No people  
better than do the Chinese. To  
offset  
thrift, will-power, and a sense  
of  
The Chinese to Cambodia as coolies but  
they do  
for They spring up any place where there is  
to be of the land peacefully:  
3ft